

Set Apart

Deuteronomy: Choose Life | Week Nine | Deuteronomy 7:1-26

A study you can do on your own in about 40 minutes. Find a quiet place, a Bible, and something to write with. The lines are for you.

THE BIG IDEA

God chose Israel not because they were many or impressive, but because he loved them. That same love calls us to live set apart from the idols that compete for our hearts, and it promises a victory we could never win on our own. Holiness is not how we earn God's love. It is how we live inside a love we have already been given.

01 Check in with God *about 5 minutes*

Before you open the passage, be honest with God about your week. Write short answers. Nobody else will read them.

1. One thing I am grateful for this week, and one thing that wore me down.

2. Growing up, one value my family would not compromise on was this, and here is how it has stayed with me.

- 3. If I did last week's study, how did the step I named go? If this is my first week, what do I hope God does in me through Deuteronomy?

02 Setting the scene

Moses is preaching on the plains of Moab, just across the Jordan from the land God promised. A new generation is about to leave forty years of wilderness behind and build a life among nations that worship other gods. Chapter 6 gave the greatest command: love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, and strength. Chapter 7 shows what that love costs when the culture around you pulls the other way.

The sermon opened with the night before a young man's first flight to America, when his parents put their hands on his shoulders and told him to remember who he was, to refuse to compromise, and not to be afraid. Moses says the same three things to Israel: remember that you are chosen, live set apart, and do not be afraid, because God is with you.

03 Read the Word *about 10 minutes*

Open your Bible to Deuteronomy 7 and read the whole chapter aloud to yourself, slowly, even if it feels strange. Reading aloud slows you down and helps you notice. If you can, read it twice. The verses for each part of the study are printed in the sections below.

MEMORY VERSE | DEUTERONOMY 7:6

For you are a holy people belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth.

Read it aloud three times now, and once each morning this week.

First impressions

4. The word, phrase, or image that stood out to me as I read was this.

5. What surprised me about how God speaks to Israel in this chapter.

04 Study the scripture *about 20 minutes*

The sermon walked through this chapter in three movements: you are chosen by grace, you are called to live set apart, and you do not have to be afraid because God has already secured the victory. The verses for each part are printed below. Each part has two questions. The first asks what the text says, the second asks what it changes in me. The dotted questions are the ones to keep if time is short.

YOU ARE CHOSEN BY GRACE

Read verses 6–11 again.

DEUTERONOMY 7:6-9 CSB

6 For you are a holy people belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth. **7** The LORD had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. **8** But because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors, he brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the place of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. **9** Know that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps his gracious covenant loyalty for a thousand generations with those who love him and keep his commands.

Before Moses gives Israel a single instruction about the nations, he tells them who they are. They are holy, chosen, and God's own possession, and the reason has nothing to do with their strength. They were the fewest of all peoples. God chose them because he loved them and because he keeps his promises, all the way back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The sermon connected this to Ephesians 1, where Paul says God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. None of us performed our way into his family. Our standing rests on his love and not on our record, on the days we feel close to God and on the days we do not.

- 6.** Look at verses 7 and 8. What reasons does God give for choosing Israel? What reason does he rule out?

- 7.** Where am I still trying to earn something God says he has already given me? What would it look like to receive it instead?

YOU ARE CALLED TO LIVE SET APART

Read verses 1–5 and 25–26 again.

DEUTERONOMY 7:4–5, 26 CSB

4 because they will turn your sons away from me to worship other gods. Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will swiftly destroy you. **5** Instead, this is what you are to do to them: tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, cut down their Asherah poles, and burn their carved images.

26 Do not bring any detestable thing into your house, or you will be set apart for destruction like it. You are to abhor and detest it utterly because it is set apart for destruction.

A NOTE ON THE HARD VERSES

You may wonder why God commanded Israel to destroy the nations. These commands belong to one moment in Israel's story and are not a pattern for God's people to repeat. Their target was the worship of the nations, not their ethnicity, which is why Rahab the Canaanite was later welcomed into Israel and into the family line of Jesus. In Christ our fight is not against people but against whatever competes for our hearts. If this troubles you, bring it to Sam or a pastor. It is a good question.

Deuteronomy 6 says love the LORD with all your heart. Deuteronomy 7 shows how: tear down the altars that compete for that heart. God knows how quickly a divided heart drifts. The same people who heard his voice at Sinai built a golden calf while Moses was still on the mountain. He refuses to share our hearts with the very things that pull us away from him, because compromise slowly harms the life he has called us to live. Holiness flows from a status we already have. On the first day of a marriage a couple is fully married; they do not start at ten percent and work their way up. In Christ we have already been declared holy, and living set apart is how we live inside that identity. It is not passive and it is not a solo effort. A gym membership changes nothing until you show up and train. Sanctification is a daily partnership with the Holy Spirit, who stands beside us, gives us power, corrects our form, and nudges us forward.

- 8.** Look at verses 4 and 5. What does God say compromise will do to Israel's hearts? What does he tell them to do instead?

- 9. What is one altar in my life, a false security, a hidden compromise, or a habit, that competes with Jesus for my heart? What would it look like to stop managing it and let the Holy Spirit help me tear it down?
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DO NOT BE AFRAID, GOD HAS GIVEN YOU VICTORY

Read verses 12–24 again.

DEUTERONOMY 7:17-19, 21-22 CSB

17 If you say to yourself, “These nations are greater than I; how can I drive them out?”

18 do not be afraid of them. Be sure to remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and all Egypt: **19** the great trials that you saw, the signs and wonders, the strong hand and outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples you fear.

21 Don’t be terrified of them, for the LORD your God, a great and awesome God, is among you. **22** The LORD your God will drive out these nations before you little by little. You will not be able to destroy them all at once; otherwise, the wild animals will become too numerous for you.

Moses knows exactly what Israel will say when they see the nations: they are greater than we are, so how can we drive them out? God’s answer is not to shrink the enemy but to point back to Egypt. Remember Pharaoh. Remember the strong hand that brought you out. The God who did that is among you, and he will drive the nations out little by little. The sermon was clear that this hope is not only for later. In Christ we walk in victory now, in the middle of hardship, pressure, and fear. Paul says that in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. That changes how we walk into work when everyone is negative, how we respond when the world feels frightening, and how we pursue justice knowing God will one day set things right.

- 10.** Look at verses 17 through 21. What does God tell Israel to do when the nations look too strong? What does he promise about himself?
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- **11.** What has God done in my past that I need to remember right now? Where this week could I carry a different hope into the people around me?
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05 Back to Jesus *about 5 minutes*

How does this passage point me back to Jesus?

Israel was chosen because God loved them, and in Christ the same is true of me: chosen before the foundation of the world and adopted through Jesus. The last verse of this chapter says that anything detestable brought into the house becomes set apart for destruction. At the cross, Jesus took that place. He was cut off and treated as the outsider so that people like me could be brought in and called God's own possession. Paul traces the whole journey in Romans 8: those God predestined he called, those he called he justified, and those he justified he glorified. Every altar I tear down is a response to a love that was already mine, and every fear I face has already been answered at an empty tomb.

- 12. Israel was told to show the idols no mercy. At the cross, Jesus received no mercy so that I could receive it. Am I approaching this week's altar as a way to earn God's love, or as a response to it?

APPLICATION

What is God telling me to do today? One specific step I will take this week.

06 Pray *about 5 minutes*

Write your prayer. Prayers on paper are slower and more honest than prayers in our heads. Tell God what you found, ask him for what you need, and name the step you just wrote down.

Who has God brought to mind?

Someone who needs the hope you have been reading about. Write their name, pray for them by name, and send them a message before you close this guide.

A PRAYER TO CARRY WITH YOU

Father, you set your heart on me before I had done anything for you. Thank you that my standing rests on your grace and not on my performance. Jesus, you were treated as an outsider so that I could be brought in. Show me the altars that compete for my heart, and give me the courage to tear them down instead of managing them. Holy Spirit, train my desires, correct my steps, and strengthen me when obedience is hard. When I am afraid of what looks stronger than me, remind me of what you have already done. I am chosen by grace, set apart for you, and secure in your victory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

At home this week

If there are children in your home, Deuteronomy 6 tells parents to talk about God's words at the table. Ask at dinner this week: **Does God love us because we are good?** Then read Deuteronomy 7:7-8 together. God loves us because he loves us, not because we earned it.

Before Sunday

Three things to carry into the rest of the week.

- Read Deuteronomy 7 again before Sunday, and ask God what he is saying to you through it.
- Take the one step you wrote down, and tell one person you have done it. A step nobody knows about is easy to skip.
- Follow up with the person whose name you wrote above. A message today, a conversation this week.

DO THIS WITH OTHERS

Deuteronomy was preached to a people, not to a person, and this guide works best with others around the table. LOFT's Bible studies meet during the week and welcome new people at any point in the series. Find one in the Church Center app or at loftcity.church, or email sam@loftcity.church and we will help you find one.